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# Contributions to the Study of Bagrid Fishes.

## 19. Systematic position of *Macrones halepensis colvillii* Hora & Misra, 1943, with description of a new species (Siluriformes, Bagridae)

by

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with 2 figures

### ABSTRACT

The status of the species *Mystus pelusius* (Solander, 1794), *aleppensis* (Günther, 1864) and *colvilli* (Günther, 1874) are discussed, the conspecificity of *aleppensis* and *pelusius* is confirmed. The new species *Mystus misrai* n. sp. from the Near East is described, including the specimen, recorded by HORA & MISRA (1943) as *Mystus halepensis colvillii*.

### INTRODUCTION

During the course of a revision of the fishes of the genus *Mystus* Scopoli on a world-wide basis in which the writer is engaged at present, the systematic position of certain species known from the Tigris watershed was investigated. It was seen that besides the type species *Mystus pelusius*<sup>1</sup> (Solander, 1794), two other species have been described from this area. GÜNTHER (1874) described *Macrones colvillii* as a new species, closely allied to his

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<sup>1</sup> See ANURADHA, S. and JAYARAM, K. C. 1985. For description and taxonomy of this species.

*M. aleppensis* (Günther, 1864) = *Bagrus halepensis* Valenciennes, 1839 = *Silurus pelusius* Solander, 1794 = *Mystus pelusius* and HORA & MISRA (1943) another new subspecies *Mystus halepensis colvillii*. A close study of the description and illustration of *Macrones colvillii* Günther, 1874 revealed that the species did not have many differences from *M. pelusius* as thought of by Günther. I had obtained for my work through the kind courtesy of Dr. Munir K. Bunni, Director, Natural History Museum, Baghdad, three examples of the type species *M. pelusius*. The morphometric data and especially the form, structure and more specifically the presence of three, narrow white longitudinal stripes along the body in both *M. pelusius*, and in *M. colvillii*, as seen from GÜNTHER's illustration, aroused a doubt regarding the validity of the latter species. The type specimen of *M. colvillii* was borrowed from the British Museum of Natural History, London and it has been demonstrated that GÜNTHER's species is only a junior objective synonym of *M. pelusius*, details of which are being published elsewhere (ANURADHA 1986). Having cleared the systematic position of *M. colvillii* Günther, it remained to fix up the status of the sub-species *M. halepensis colvillii* described by HORA & MISRA (1943). This paper presents the taxonomy of this fish which has been found neither belonging to *Mystus aleppensis* = *M. pelusius* nor *M. colvillii* but necessitating it being described with a new name.

## TAXONOMY

HORA & MISRA (1943) described *M. halepensis colvillii* from a specimen 150.0 mm long, collected from the River Tigris, Baghdad and locally known as "Abouz-Zoumeir". From the illustration given by HORA & MISRA (1943, fig. 4) and description it is seen that the fish has a deep body, short in length, adipose fin about three times as long as dorsal fin base commencing almost immediately behind the rayed dorsal fin and the body without any stripes or bands. It is very clear that this fish cannot be referred to either *M. aleppensis* (Günther, 1864) = *M. pelusius* nor to *M. colvillii* (Günther, 1874) even as a subspecies since it is entirely a different one in its body form and colouration.

JAYARAM (1974) identified one example (MHNG 603.95) from Lake Antioche, Syria and erroneously referred it as *M. pelusius pelusius*. This may be because of his not having examined at that time specimens of *M. pelusius* Solander nor its original description. This specimen along with two others was again borrowed from Muséum d'Histoire naturelle, Genève, through the kind courtesy of Dr. Volker Mahnert and it is now clearly seen that they agree more or less with HORA & MISRA's description of the so-called *M. halepensis colvillii* (see Table I). This further confirms that *M. colvillii* Günther, 1874 is a synonym of *M. pelusius* as indicated in another publication (ANURADHA 1986) and that HORA & MISRA's *M. halepensis colvillii* represents neither *Macrones aleppensis* (Günther 1864) (= *Mystus pelusius* (Solander)) nor *M. colvillii sensu* GÜNTHER, 1874, and it should bear a new name. As such the species is described here as new.

### *Mystus misrai* sp. nov.

**H o l o t y p e :** One specimen, 123.1 mm standard length, from Lake Antioche, Syria, MHNG 603.95.

**P a r a t y p e s :** One specimen, 117.6 mm standard length, same locality, MHNG 2231.84; one specimen, 115.7 mm standard length, same locality, ZSI, FF. 2315. One

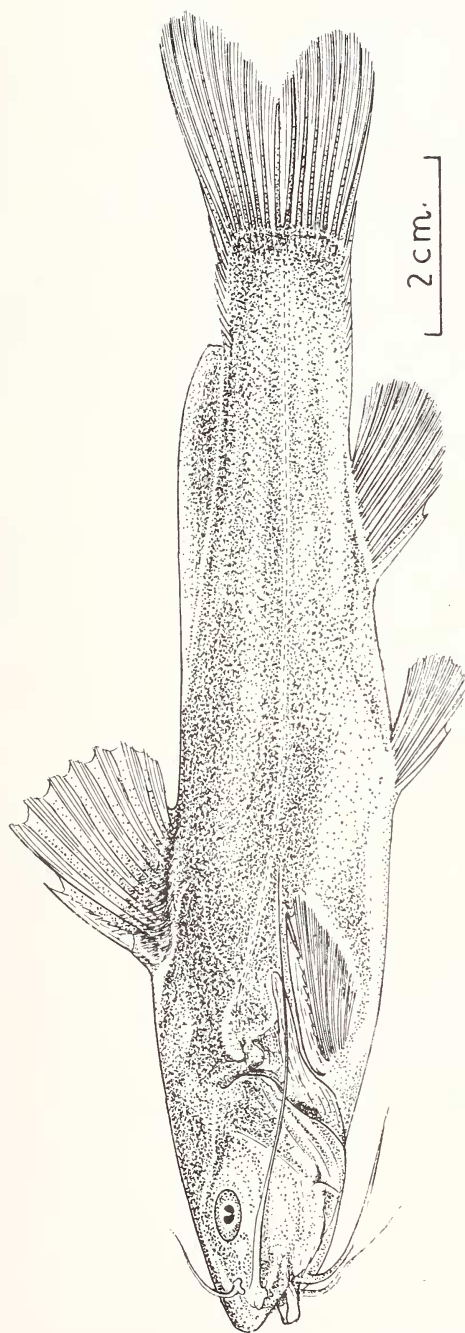


FIG. 1.

*Mystus misrai* n. sp., paratype ZSI FF. 2315.

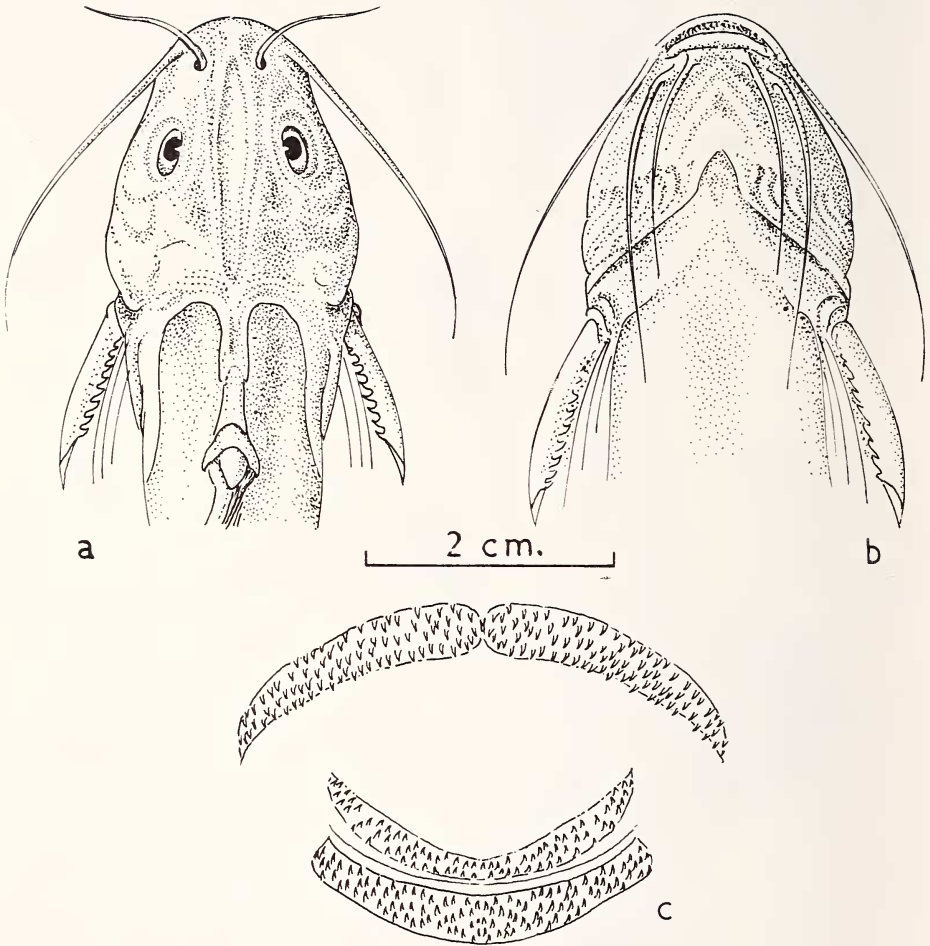


FIG. 2.

*Mystus misrai* n. sp.; Dorsal (a) and ventral (b) view of head and anterior portion of body;  
c: Dentition (paratype ZSI FF. 2315).

specimen 125.0 mm standard length from River Tigris, Baghdad, described by HORA & MISRA (1943, fig. 4), actual housing place unknown.

*Description:* Body depth 20.83 (19.22-22.99)  $N^2 = 4$ ; head length 22.91 (22.40-23.85)  $N = 4$ ; width of head 17.18 (16.33-17.98)  $N = 4$ ; head depth 14.30 (13.48-15.13)  $N = 3$ ; predorsal length 37.73 (37.24-38.34)  $N = 3$ ; post-dorsal length 67.0 (63.79-69.13)  $N = 3$ ; length of dorsal spine 13.45 (12.10-16.00)  $N = 4$ ; all in percentage of standard length.

Eye 19.14 (17.75-21.43)  $N = 4$ ; inter-orbital width 30.23 (26.79-32.01)  $N = 4$ ; snout length 41.72 (41.30-42.45)  $N = 3$ ; dorsal spine 58.84 (53.60-71.43)  $N = 4$ ; pectoral spine 66.67 (64.39-72.50)  $N = 4$ , all in percentage of head length. Eye 46.08 (42.98-52.17) in percentage of snout length 63.96 (56.32-80.00) in percentage of inter-orbital width. Adipose dorsal fin base 35.8 (34.86-37.53)  $N = 3$ , in percentage of anal fin base. Length of caudal peduncle 50.9 (47.46-53.26)  $N = 3$ , in percentage of least height of caudal peduncle.

Dorsal profile of head gently rising. Median longitudinal groove on head extending upto base of occipital process as a single long fontanelle. Occipital process subcutaneous; 4.13 (3.85-4.30)  $N = 3$  times longer than broad at base and reaching basal bone of dorsal spine. Premaxillary band of teeth 4.69 (4.36-5.20)  $N = 3$ ; times longer than broad; teeth

TABLE I

Comparison of *Mystus halepensis colvillii* HORA & MISRA (1943) and *Mystus misrai* sp. nov.

Characters	<i>Mystus halepensis colvillii</i> Hora & Misra (1943) specimen (Data taken from literature) (1 example)	<i>Mystus misrai</i> from Museum Genève, 603.95 (3 examples)
Total length .....	150.0	146.4 (141.4-152.2)
Standard length .....	125.0	118.8 (115.7-123.1)
Total length/Body depth .....	5.77	5.95 (5.32-6.44)
Total length/Head length .....	5.36	5.34 (5.12-5.47)
Standard length/Head length .....	4.46	4.33 (4.19-4.42)
Standard length/Body depth .....	4.81	4.82 (4.35-5.20)
Standard length/Width of head .....	5.90	5.74 (5.56-5.92)
Snout length/Inter-orbital width .....	1.53	1.33 (1.31-1.35)
Head length/Inter-orbital width .....	3.73	3.19 (3.12-3.27)
Head length/Dorsal spine .....	1.40	1.83 (1.77-1.87)
Head length/Pectoral spine .....	1.38	1.54 (1.53-1.55)
Head length/Snout length .....	2.43	2.40 (2.36-2.42)
Head length/Length of dorsal fin base .....	1.56	1.61 (1.55-1.70)
Head length/Eye .....	4.67	5.44 (5.25-5.63)
Snout length/Eye .....	1.92	2.27 (2.18-2.33)
Inter-orbital width/Eye .....	1.25	1.71 (1.61-1.78)

<sup>2</sup>  $N = 4$  includes HORA & MISRA's (1943) available published data.  $N = 3$  only MHNG material.



on palate in a semilunar uninterrupted band and on lower jaw in two deeply curved bands separated in the middle. All teeth villiform.

Four pair of barbels. Maxillary reach nearly end of pectoral spine; nasal up to anterior border of eye; outer mandibular pectoral fin base and inner mandibular shorter. All barbels thin, outer and inner mandibular barbels inserted at different levels.

Longest ray of dorsal fin extending up to base of adipose fin. Dorsal spine smooth, scarcely serrated behind 58.84 (53.60-71.43)  $N = 4$ ; pectoral spine short 66.67 (64.39-72.50)  $N = 4$  in percentage of head length and with 9-10 ( $N = 3$ ) antrose teeth along inner edge. Pelvic fins do not reach anal fin. Caudal fin forked, lobes overlapping with rounded edges. Lateral line more or less straight, simple.

*Colour:* In alcohol preserved specimens, pale yellowish brown with head slightly lighter in shade. No spots or stripes present.

*Distribution:* Syria, Iraq in rivers and lakes.

*Remarks:* It has been stated elsewhere that the single specimen of HORA & MISRA's description, 125.0 mm in standard length is also referable to *Mystus misrai*. This specimen in particular is not traceable. However, in the above description HORA & MISRA's (1943) data that are published have also been included. There are certain variations noted in HORA & MISRA's (1943) specimens which are as below:

The dorsal spine is shorter; eye is smaller, the maxillary barbels, nasal barbels, outer mandibular barbels and upper lobe of caudal fin are longer. All these differences are within the limits of individual variation of the species.

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